

September 9, 1997

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SUBJECT: Deputy Secretary's Focus Report

The following is a brief summary of Department of Transportation events and items of interest from the past month:

OPERATIONAL ITEMS:

WSDOT THE LEADER IN SETTING SPECIFICATION STANDARDS

At the request of FHWA and at their expense, Jerry Weigel participated as a guest speaker at the 23rd Northwest Geotechnical Workshop held in Boise, Idaho on August 9. Jerry explained how the WSDOT shaft specification was developed with the full cooperation of drilling industry representation.

The FHWA Region 10 Geotechnical Engineer arranged for this guest participation and has requested that WSDOT allow distribution of this specification nationwide under FHWA letterhead. Judging from the enthusiastic reception of this specification at the referenced workshop, this specification will be used by many of the nation's state departments of transportation.

On a similar note, a WSDOT group is presently writing a new concrete specification that will eliminate the contracting agency concrete mix designs. This specification, being developed with industry agreement, should be completed and ready for implementation this winter.

CONTRACT AD & AWARDS

July 1997 bids were opened on seven preservation projects for a total of seven new contracts. The total engineer's estimate was \$5,989,942.69, with total bids of \$6,120,632.44, or 2.18 percent above the estimate. There were 277 uncompleted contracts with a total work-in-progress dollar value of \$1,211,900,138.56.

WSDOT'S MATERIALS LAB STAYING AHEAD OF EVER CHANGING WORLD OF PAVEMENT

The AASHTO Joint Task Force on Pavements annual meeting was held in Seattle on August 6 - 8. The objective of this task force was to provide a focal point and working

group with various types of pavement expertise to develop and recommend AASHTO guides, policies, and standards for the design, rehabilitation, accelerated testing and management of pavements and shoulders.

Other pavement related activities occurring last month include the Eighth International Conference on Asphalt Pavements was held this year in Seattle at the University of Washington Campus on August 9 to 14. This conference is a major draw for all nations around the world with many technical presentations concerning all facets of asphalt research, design, construction and management. The theme of this conference was "Paving the Gap - Research into Practice". WSDOT was well represented at the conference by personnel from the Olympia Service Center as well as from the regions.

WSDOT & SOUTH AFRICA MAKE PLANS TO SHARE TECHNOLOGY

WSDOT's Materials Laboratory staff met with representatives from South Africa, FHWA, University of California-Berkley, and UW on August 15 and discussed the potential exchange of technology that the United States and South Africa have to share. WSDOT is contemplating constructing a type of pavement structure that is common in South Africa and there was good discussion as to the potential problems and design details. Plans were also set in motion to have a national technology exchange conference in 1998 at UC-Berkley.

NEW INTERVIEW HANDBOOK INCLUDES CUSTOMER SERVICE FOCUS

The Office of Human Resources in coordination with the Office of Equal Opportunity have published an 'Interview Handbook' to assist supervisors in planning and conducting selection interviews and evaluation and rating candidates. The handbook urges managers to use the interview process to identify individuals who are not only technically competent but also have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to support the department's commitment to quality customer service and workforce diversity. The handbook contains sample background and reference inquiries as well as guidance from the Human Rights Commission on legal vs. illegal questions.

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY COMING TO WSDOT

WSDOT's Staff Development office is in the process of installing equipment which will provide access to a new training media, National Technological University (NTU). NTU, located in Fort Collins, Colorado is a "University without Walls". It obtains courses from other institutions and transmits them to viewers located throughout the world. In addition to graduate courses which form the core of its curriculum, NTU also broadcasts short (4-8 hour) non-credit training courses and a limited number of National Highway Institute (NHI) short courses. Staff Development has initiated purchase of a satellite antenna which is part of the receiving link. The K-band encoder-decoder provided by the Federal Highway Administration and the antenna constitute the ground station which enables WSDOT to receive NTU programming. After installation of the equipment, Staff Development will conduct a two-year pilot program to determine whether the media meets WSDOT needs.

WSF CUSTOMER SERVICE SCORECARD FOR AUGUST

August 1997 (1 August through close of business 26 August 1997)

Service trips scheduled:	13,732
Service trips completed:	13,314
Completion rate:	96.96%
Without tide cancellations:	97.13%
Without tide & weather cancel.:	97.13 %

Year-to-date 1997 (through close of business 26 August 1997)

Service trips scheduled:	117,234
Service trips completed:	116,155
Completion rate:	99.08%
Without tide cancellations:	99.40%
Without tide & weather cancel.	99.46%

During August WSF completed 17 consecutive days without a customer service disruption. That represented 9,175 consecutive customer service trips and set a new record since trip completion measurements started in 1995.

MV KLUCKITAT HIT WITH ELECTRICAL PROBLEMS

On August 6th M/V KLUCKITAT suffered an electrical casualty that reduced service to a one-boat schedule on the Port Townsend to Keystone route. As soon as it was determined that the vessel would be unavailable for an extended period of time, FAC members on both sides of this route as well as community leaders of affected communities were given notification. It is anticipated that the route will be back to a two-boat schedule during the "shoulder season" between September 14th through October 12th. WSF is exploring the possibility of leasing a P/O boat for selected days during that period.

SEATTLE TERMINAL RECEIVES LONG-AWAITED ELEVATOR

The newly constructed elevator at the street end of Colman Dock/Pier 52 went into operation the first week of August satisfying a long standing ADA deficiency at the Seattle Terminal.

PROPOSED BOUNDARIES FOR ADVISORY ELECTION ON SR 16/TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE ANNOUNCED

At a September 5th news conference WSDOT unveiled the proposed geographic boundary of the initial affected area. Citizens within the proposed boundary would be affected by tolls to pay for potential new capacity improvements on the SR16/Tacoma Narrows Bridge. This is the first step in the process that will set the final boundary for the advisory election, currently scheduled to be held during the general election on November 3, 1998. The advisory election will gauge the support or opposition to the imposition of tolls to pay for new capacity improvements on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

The public review period also begins on September 5th and will include a series of public meetings in communities throughout the initial affected area. Written comments on the proposed boundary will be accepted through November 18. Public comments will be forwarded to a Local Involvement Committee (LIC). The LIC will be formed to advise the Department on the final boundary of the affected project area. The membership of the LIC is defined in RCW 47.46.

The proposed boundary was drawn using the results of traffic and economic studies required under RCW 47.46. The law establishes five different criteria for determining who would be affected by tolls on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Based on the legislative criteria, the Department set forth key principles in carrying out the studies. The first is that the boundary should be less than the entire state. The second is that the boundary should include as many of the people who use the bridge as possible. Third, that the boundary should be compact, connected and include communities of interest. The five criteria include: current facility use, travel diversion, economic impacts on facility users, cost of goods & services and the relationship to state needs and benefits. A final boundary will be completed in early 1998.

CRITERIA DEVELOPED FOR FREIGHT INVESTMENT PROGRAM

WSDOT's Freight Mobility Project Prioritization Committee (FMPPC) identified eligibility criteria for a proposed state strategic freight investment program at its second meeting. FMPPC recommended that eligible freight projects be on a strategic freight roadway, waterway or railway corridor as one criterion. As a second criterion, the committee recommended that eligible freight projects be aimed primarily at: (a) reducing barriers to freight movement or increasing capacity for freight movement with only incidental benefits to general mobility; or (b) mitigating the impacts on local communities of increasing freight movement. Future FMPPC meetings will focus on identifying criteria to rank freight projects in priority order and to select projects for possible funding. The committee will also consider the role of partnerships in a strategic freight investment program. FMPPC is part of WSDOT's effort to implement the recommendations of the Legislature's Freight Mobility Advisory Committee (FMAC). FMPPC members represent cities, counties, ports, freight shippers, trucking, railroads and the Transportation Commission. Transportation Economic Partnerships is coordinating the department's technical support for FMPPC activities, including the development of working papers for committee review.

COZY NOOK CREEK GETS RAIL FLATCAR BRIDGE

Two and one half miles north of Goldendale on SR97, WSDOT has an easement road that serves a rock source pit, a State Patrol firing range, and a local farmer. The road crosses Cozy Nook Creek which is a mild and sometimes dry creek. Cozy Nook Creek goes under the road by way of three 18" culverts.

After many winters and snow melts that had overflowed the culverts and caused the area maintenance department to patch and fill around the ends, Washington State Department of Fisheries decided those repairs needed a hydraulic project approval. A permit was issued with two provisions: 1) a bridge would replace the three 18" culverts; 2) the bridge would withstand 100 year flood plain calculations.

Goldendale Maintenance requested that the Southwest Region bridge team solve the problem. The bridge team responded with the solution being a rail flatcar bridge. With a lowboy from Yakima and one from Vancouver, two 10-1/2 foot by 54 foot rail flatcars were transported from Cow Creek yard on SR504 to Goldendale. The rail flatcars were from a completed state project on Mt. St. Helens.

Southwest Region Bridge mobilized its 35 ton crane to load the 50,000 pound cars and placed them on eight 2' x 2' x 11' ecology blocks that served as abutments.

The side by side rail cars made a 21 foot wide by 56 foot long bridge with a 26 foot free-standing span four feet above the existing road and culverts.

CABLES IN PLACE FOR SECOND NARROWS BRIDGE CAMERA

Work to string fiber-optic cables across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge on SR 16 for the second traffic-monitoring camera was completed in late August. The cables will be used to hook up a camera on the west side of the bridge, near the 24th Street ramp. The second camera is expected to be operational by early October. A camera on the east side of the bridge near the Jackson Avenue ramp has been in operation since March. The main purpose of the cameras is to accurately identify blocking problems on the bridge and provide quick response with appropriate equipment. Installation of the cable has been a partnership project and its use, including the video picture it carries, will be shared by the WSDOT, Washington State Patrol and Tacoma Fire Department. Olympic Region will be working with the Northwest Region traffic office to provide Internet access to the camera shots later this fall.

CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS MORE EFFICIENT

WSDOT has been involved with a working group to develop a more efficient and cost effective (to the consultants) consultant selection process for on-call projects. Interviews were held for on-call environmental and on-call transportation design over the last two to three months. Questions were established and presented at the interviews utilizing a

powerpoint program. Each consultant was allowed only one 11x17 handout at the interview and they could not bring in the usual display material (overheads, boards, computer displays, etc.). This helped reduce their costs considerably.

A questionnaire is being developed that will be distributed during September to all prime consultants that participated in the new process. The preliminary feedback from the consultants and WSDOT executive staff involved with the interviews was quite favorable. Results from the questionnaire are expected before the end of the year.

MAINFRAME APPLICATIONS FOR YEAR 2000 PROJECT NEARLY FINISHED

The Mainframe Applications portion of the Management Information Services Year 2000 project is nearing completion of Phase I. Phase I handles the upgrade of the existing software code. As upgrading of the software code system occurs, regression testing and user acceptance testing is being done to ensure that the system works as it did before the upgrade. The mainframe applications Year 2000 team continues to archive obsolete software and systems. The building of the phase II software conversion factory is getting underway. Meanwhile, the Year 2000 test lab is established and ready for use on the first floor of the Legion Building. The test lab provides the equipment and tools to test applications to find out if they are Year 2000 compliant or not. Management Information Services (MIS) will contact system owners of the systems that are identified on the inventory list to arrange a test time. If customers have a system that is not on the inventory list, they can still set up a time to do testing in the lab by contacting Management Information Services Year 2000 Help Desk.

REFLECTIVE SIGN PROBLEMS RESOLVED FOR WSDOT SIGN SHOP

Staff of the WSDOT Sign Shop reported problems with reflective sheeting provided under state contract 07296. Gary Smith, OSC Purchasing Officer, brought the Office of State Procurement's contract administrator up to speed on problems when they first surfaced. Gary then recommended prompt and definitive action to resolve current problems reported by the Sign Shop. The supplier has been found officially in breach of contract and must pay for additional costs suffered by the Sign Shop as a result. This case proves the benefit of consistent documentation and reporting of poor service or products found on state contract.

T2 ROADSHOW RECORDS BROKEN THIS SPRING

A new record was set by John Easley, the T2 Center roadshow trainer, this past spring. John provided 101 training sessions throughout the state at local agency sites, training over 1,100 people. Through extra effort, and traveling in excess of 12,000 miles in less than three months, John provided an average of 3-4 hours of informal training at each session. Ninety-seven percent of the participants rated the roadshow sessions as good or excellent. Each fall and spring since 1985 the T2 Center roadshows have been taken directly to the customer where they are well received. As the second such program developed in the country, the Washington roadshows program has been adopted by other T2 Centers in the United States. By working closely with our customers and being flexible regarding scheduling, our roadshow trainer has provided a top quality service.

MONTHLY WSDOT GRAIN TRAIN PERFORMANCE REPORT

Total carloads shipped for June 8
Total carloads shipped January through June 157*

Grain Train Revolving Fund:

Beginning Balance -	\$319,802.00
Current Month Revenues -	\$9,685.54
Current Month Expenses -	(\$679.65)

Ending Balance -

\$328,807.89

*157 rail cars of grain is equivalent to approximately 449 truckloads.

HERO PROGRAM MUST MAKE DECISION ABOUT INACCURATE SIGNS

With funding secured through the biennium, streamlining and improving several HERO program elements is now a main focus. One new challenge has come about due to changes in the telecommunication industry. When the phone company added new telephone area codes in Snohomish and Pierce Counties, WSDOT signs on area freeways advising motorists to call 764-HERO to report fast lane violators became inaccurate outside of King County. Upon researching the issue, it was discovered that the phone company will not mitigate or assist businesses affected by the change from one area code to three in the greater Seattle area. WSDOT must decide what to do about HERO highway signs and calls motorists attempt to make from other area codes. A small ad hoc committee has been formed to review this issue and recommend an action plan to resolve it.

COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION LAUNCHES AWARENESS PROGRAM

The Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Office has selected the Evans Group as the consultant for the CTR Communication and Awareness Program. The Evans Group will be providing assistance in advertising and promoting the use of non-single occupant vehicle transportation options. The scope of work will include market research; marketing and advertising strategy development; product branding; media planning; purchasing and placement; creative product development; and evaluation of the effectiveness of the marketing program. The services under this consultant contract does not represent the full efforts to encourage non-Single Occupancy Vehicle transportation options. The services provided by the Evans Group will build on the promotional and service activities of alternative transportation service providers, local jurisdictions, and WSDOT. The CTR Office hopes to have the Evans Group under contract and begin work by the end of the month.

I-405 SHUT DOWN OVER TWO WEEKENDS FOR CONSTRUCTION

A six-mile section of Interstate 405 was repaved over the weekends of Aug. 15 and Aug. 22. This work was done with construction closures never tried before--closing all lanes of one direction of I-405 over each weekend.

On the evening of Friday, Aug.15, all lanes of southbound I-405 were closed between Coal Creek Parkway Southeast and State Route 169. The southbound lanes remained closed around the clock until Monday morning.

The next weekend, the same closure occurred in the northbound direction. On Friday evening, Aug. 22, crews closed all northbound lanes within the same limits, and kept the lanes closed around the clock until Monday morning.

WSDOT decided to try these unique construction closures for the following reasons:

Cost Savings

Construction engineers believe these directional closures will shorten the project by an entire construction season. This reduced time equates to hundreds of thousands of saved dollars that would have been spent on traffic control, mobilizing equipment and personnel, and administering the project. Because the project time will be shortened, motorists will also realize savings in time, money and fuel, and will enjoy a smoother ride after days of work rather than months.

Motorist Convenience

Motorists were indeed inconvenienced over the two weekend closures. However, in the long run, the shortened contract time will eliminate several months of night lane closures and the many hours of delay associated with those closures.

Safety

Eliminating live traffic near the construction zone meant the zone was a much safer place for construction crews. Not only was it safer for workers, but it was also safer for motorists because the closures reduced the potential for construction-related accidents.

Quality

WSDOT engineers believe these total closures will result in a higher quality of paved roadway than would have been achieved by paving short segments during nights.

Coordination

In the planning stage, WSDOT staff discussed these closures with local officials from the many communities lining the I-405 corridor, and reached a consensus that the closures were worth trying. Staff used departmental resources such as highway-advisory-radio broadcasts, the WSDOT Internet Home Page, the WSDOT Commuter Information Line, and variable-message signs to notify the public. Other resources helped mitigate traffic congestion during the closures, such as Incident Response personnel who were available to respond to roadway incidents.

University of Washington Professors Joe Mahoney and Fred Mannering used these unique closures to conduct a federally funded study evaluating economic and quality issues, comparing this construction strategy to more conventional night lane closures.

As expected, motorists on Interstate 5 experienced heavier-than-normal congestion, but traffic on Bellevue and Renton city streets and the remainder of I-405 flowed relatively smoothly as motorists heeded advice to avoid the area.

Over the next several weeks, motorists will still see day and night lane closures in the construction zone as crews work to finish the project. This work includes painting jersey barrier, completing sections of noise wall, finishing electrical work, installing permanent signing, and removing construction debris.

PANAL DISCUSSES ETHIC LAWS & THE ABILITY TO SERVE THE PUBLIC

Lana Monfort attended the Integrity in Public Service Series, which is a monthly panel presentation and roundtable discussion on matters affecting the public trust in the legislature and state government. The topic for the meeting was "Ethics update from the Ethics Boards and Beyond". The discussion was - are we serving the public well with the Ethics Law or is it hindering us from serving the public?

WAC CHANGES POSSIBLE REGARDING USE OF STATE RESOURCES

Based on a public hearing that the Executive Ethics Board is planning in September on their WAC rule regarding de minimus use of state resources as it relates to the use of computers, the Audit Office solicited comments from any interested employees. Those comments will be presented to the Board as individual comments. The agency will remain neutral on any proposed WAC change.

REDUCTION IN FEES COLLECTED MAY BRING TOGETHER AGENCIES

WSDOT Economics staff met with LTC staff to discuss various aspects of the fees forecast. This meeting was prompted, in part, by Representative Maryann Mitchell's interest in the basis for recent reductions in the forecast of revenue from vehicles subject to the combined licensing fee. Her interest in this matter may lead to the formation of an

interagency work-group composed of representatives from the State Patrol, Licensing, Transportation, and the LTC.

ADVANCED COMPOSITE MATERIALS TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE

Research staff attended an FHWA presentation on Fiber Reinforced Polymer Composites-Applications in the USA. This is a rapidly growing technology developed by the Air Force, in the construction of the Stealth Bomber, that is now being used in many other applications including bridge construction. Both the federal government and private institutions are funding many demonstration bridge projects to show that advanced composite materials can be applied to rebuilding our highway system in a more efficient way.

QUALITY ITEMS:

EASTERN WASHINGTON REST AREAS RECEIVE INFORMATIONAL SIGNS

During the month of July, the Heritage Corridors Program installed two traveler information signs at the Quincy Valley Safety rest area near Quincy on SR 28, and at the Horn School rest area near the town of Rosalia on SR 195. The displays are enclosed back-lit units constructed of top-quality materials. This program is part of an effort to provide traveler information at those rest areas statewide with little or no information. Design and installation is done by STOREYCO, the state vendor providing commercial and non-commercial traveler information in our safety rest areas. STOREYCO receives rent credits for work on this project, therefore, no actual cost is incurred by WSDOT on this project.

These signs are ADA accessible and include individual panels featuring next services, emergency services in four languages, a state highway map, a custom made local area map, and two panels highlighting non-commercial attractions of a recreational, heritage, cultural, or artistic nature. These "promotional" panels were carefully developed in partnership with WSDOT Region staff, local chambers of commerce, visitor information centers, universities, historical societies, and museums. Heritage Corridors Program plans to install several more signs in the future.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT BEING SIGNED

Over 30 local agencies have already signed the Mutual Aid Agreement that was sent to all cities and counties at the end of July 1997. Agencies signatory to this agreement have their contracts in place to immediately assist each other during disasters/emergencies. This agreement and supporting guidance for its use are on TransAid's Internet Home Page. A listing of signatory agencies will also be maintained on the Internet and a hard copy listing will be periodically sent to all signatory agencies. State agencies will soon be contacted to have them be a signatory of the agreement.

GOOD NEWS ITEMS:

PULLMAN BIKE PATH PROJECT AWARDED

The SR 270/Pullman Bicycle Path project was awarded to Motley-Motley Construction of Pullman. This \$1.1 million project has been in development for several years. A community effort has raised over \$400,000 toward the construction of this pathway adjacent to SR 270 between Pullman and the Idaho border. It is anticipated that this path

will get heavy use as it connects the Washington State University campus in Pullman with University of Idaho in nearby Moscow.

WSF WELCOMES TWO NEW FERRIES AND AWAITS A THIRD

The MV Wenatchee was successfully launched on August 21st with participation from Representative Schmidt and Senator Sellar. Several other Legislators were also in attendance. WSF was pleased to have Commissioner Tom Green on the program as well as excellent representation by Mayor Tilly and members of the Wenatchee Community.

Also arriving was the MV Tacoma to WSF on August 18th. WSF expects the assembly of the MV Puyallup to begin around the first of September.

SPECIAL THANKS COMES FROM WSDOT CUSTOMER

To the State Department of Transportation Project Engineer:

I'm writing to say a big thank you for all the improvements that are being made on I-5 between Kelso and Olympia. It has been especially exciting to be able to use the on ramp north of Kelso and arrive smoothly onto I-5 north. Thanks for each little improvement.

Sincerely,
Karen Lewis-Kevorline

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE SPONSORED BY WSDOT WELL RECEIVED

Anita Aguigui, Eastern Region Affirmative Action Officer, sponsored and hosted the first Diversity Recruitment Committee meeting. This is a community based committee comprised of public and private sector employers and community based organizations. Feedback indicates this is a long needed program for the Spokane community. Future meetings are to be hosted by different agencies and community based organizations each month. The September meeting is scheduled for Spokane City Hall.

COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION PROGRAM NOW TRACKING COSTS

Over the last year, the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) staff has worked to produce a software package that would allow Employee Transportation Coordinators to track the costs of their CTR Program. The CTR Cost Tracker was finally shipped on August 1. This is an easy-to-use program allows Employee Transportation Coordinators to record costs as they incur them and then produces several reports that they can use in tracking their programs and explaining them to management. At the end of two years, it also will fill out a CTR cost survey.

WSDOT & BIG BROTHERS BEGIN PARTNERSHIP

In April, the Washington State Department of Transportation partnered with Big Brothers of King County to support the "Clothes for Kids" program. The new program collects old and used clothing to be sold through the newly established Big Brothers of King County Donation Center, located in Tukwila.

In February of 1996, Big Brothers opened the doors to its donation center as another funding source for Big Brother matches throughout King County. For the first time in its 40-year history, Big Brothers of King County is servicing over 500 matches. At present there are over 400 boys waiting to be matched to a positive male role model.

During the months of April, May and June, the Washington State Department of Transportation's King County maintenance facilities served as designated drop-off sites for those wishing to donate articles of clothing. Four hundred articles of clothing were collected, which produced \$1,400 in funding for the Big Brothers program.

GEO SERVICES ASSISTING RTA LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

The Geographic Services Branch is directing its technical energies toward the Regional Transit Authority's light rail project by assisting in the following ways:

Aerial Photography has taken initial aerial negatives, centered over the proposed primary and alternate corridors, and reproduced them as color photo print displays for planning tools. Photo mapping flights begin this month over the Tacoma site.

The Geodetic Survey crew is targeting the Tacoma site and planning the target layout for the remaining 28 miles of corridor with the Photogrammetry Section.

The Photogrammetry section is coordinating the use of several consultant mapping firms to complete all mapping by December of this year.

The Cartography section has produced a comprehensive map of the central Puget Sound area with the proposed light rail corridor superimposed over the state routes and city streets.